



County of Fairfax, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 24, 2020

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Barbara Byron, Director
Department of Planning and Development 

SUBJECT: Summary of Land Use Policy Committee Discussion (July 21, 2020):
Washington Dulles International Airport Noise Contours

At a public hearing before the Planning Commission on July 15, 2020 regarding RZ/FDP 2019-SU-010 (concurrent with PCA 78-S-063-10 and PCA 81-S-076), K. Hovnanian at The Boulevard at Westfields, LLC, the Planning Commission requested a summary of the discussion from an upcoming meeting of the Board of Supervisors' Land Use Policy Committee to be held on July 21, 2020 related to airport noise contours for the Washington Dulles International Airport.

There were a number of informational materials distributed to the Board for discussion at the July 21, 2020, Land Use Policy Committee Meeting. These include the Ricondo Report prepared for MWAA, the peer review report by Johnson Aviation, Inc. prepared for the County, the PowerPoint presentation by Nick Johnson, and my PowerPoint presentation. Those materials, as well as the video of the meeting, can be found on the Board's meeting website linked to the [committee meeting](#). Attached is a summary of the meeting.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please feel free to contact me.

Attachment: a/s



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**Board of Supervisors Land Use Policy Committee Meeting
Washington Dulles International Airport Noise Contours
July 21, 2020**

Barbara Byron, Director, Department of Planning and Development (DPD), introduced the meeting. She indicated that there were a number of materials distributed to the Board including the Ricondo Report prepared for MWAA, the peer review report by Johnson Aviation, Inc. prepared for the county, the PowerPoint presentation by Nick Johnson, and the PowerPoint presentation by Barbara Byron. Ms. Byron then introduced the topic with a brief review of the Board's directives following the adoption of Plan Amendment (PA) 2018-III-DS1 (Land Unit J of the Dulles Suburban Center) on May 7, 2019. She further noted that hiring an independent consultant to undertake a peer review of the 2019 Airport Noise Contours was one of several Board directed follow-up actions. Nick Johnson, Johnson Aviation Inc., was introduced to provide an overview of his report, *Review and Assessment - Dulles International Aircraft Noise Contour Map Update*.

Mr. Johnson began his presentation by outlining the purpose of his report, which was to review the Ricondo report for conformance with industry standards for noise contours; provide advice on potential amendments to the County's Comprehensive Plan Policies and Zoning Ordinance; provide guidance on the MWAA process and the FAA's Part 150 process; and compare Dulles Airport land use planning to similar airports. The consultant was also charged with identifying jurisdictions that permit residential uses in the 60-65 DNL noise impact area; identifying impacts of the FAA's NextGen modernization program; and comparing existing operations to the ultimate operations forecast for the Dulles Airport.

Mr. Johnson summarized the following highlights from his report:

- The Ricondo noise analysis is well-documented and consistent with FAA guidance.
- The 2019 ultimate noise contour methodology is consistent with the approach used in developing the 1993 contours.
- An ultimate capacity methodology was used only for the Dulles and Denver Airports, which were considered to be the only two "greenfield" airports in the country when they were initially developed.
- The methodology is based on the projected annual operational capacity and not on demand.
- The methodology and contours are based on a 60 to 90-year buildout.
- The operational capacity associated with the existing four runways can handle demand for the next 60 to 75 years. The operational capacity associated with the planned five runways can handle demand for the next 80 to 90 years.
- Dulles flight operations peaked around 2005. That activity level is not projected to be achieved again until 2070.
- Large hub airports typically use a short-term (5 – 20 year) Part 150 process to identify projected noise impacts and areas in need of mitigation.

- There are five large hub airports in the US that permit residential use in the 60 DNL contour while requiring notifications to future residents regarding potential noise impacts.

Mr. Johnson provided four recommendations to the Board as follows:

- Consider the use of the MWAA 2019 ultimate 65+ DNL contour.
- Analyze the 60-65 DNL noise impact area to permit residential use in that area, with restrictions.
- Consider noise notification for concentrated overflight areas within the 60-65 DNL area (as is done in the Dulles Suburban Center's Land Unit J).
- Work with MWAA on nighttime (10 p.m. - 7 a.m.) noise abatement procedures and preferential runway use program.

Ms. Byron continued with the staff presentation focusing on three areas for policy discussion, as follows:

Consideration of the adoption of new noise contours

Staff presented several concerns, which led to the recommendation that new contours should not be adopted. These concerns included: Dulles is no longer a greenfield airport and should not be treated differently from other major airports; using projections of capacity (not demand) over a 60-90 year horizon does not account for continued technological advances or operational changes affecting noise impact areas; given that the 4th runway is minimally used (Runway 01L/19R utilized at 0 – 3.2%), there continues to be adequate capacity for airport growth; and, a 60 - 90 year horizon is well beyond a typical planning horizon of +/- 20 years. While recognizing the importance of the Dulles Airport and its key economic role in the region, staff stressed the need for balance to address county economic needs and objectives.

Consideration of permitting residential use in the 60-65 DNL contour area

Consistent with the consultant's recommendation, and with other jurisdictions in the country, staff strongly recommended looking at the current Comprehensive Plan policy to allow it to align with the Zoning Ordinance, which permits residential uses in the 60-65 DNL contour area.

Consideration of monitoring and working with MWAA on nighttime flights

Staff recommended continued work with MWAA to review and monitor nighttime flight activities and growth of the airport as a cargo hub.

Following discussion by the Board on the issues, including the need to balance the economic importance of the airport with the county's economic development and land use objectives, there was general agreement among the Board members that aligned with the staff recommendations to not adopt the MWAA proposed 2019 contours; to authorize an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan to permit residential uses in the 60 – 65 DNL contour; and, to continue to work with MWAA on nighttime activities to minimize noise impacts on the community.